



83 West Street Danbury, CT 06810

Phone: 203-797-8088 Fax: 203-792-7626

Visit us on the Internet at <http://www.danburychildrenfirst.org>

February 18, 2009

Re: Support of Allocations to Parent Trust Fund and the CT Commission on Children

Dear Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian and members of the Appropriations Committee,

On behalf of Danbury Children First and the Danbury School Readiness Council, I urge your support of the Parent Trust Fund, which is matched by the Graustein Memorial Fund, and the preservation of the Connecticut Commission on Children, which generates effective parents who lead and volunteer to make a difference for children throughout the State.

The Parent Trust Fund supports parent engagement programs offered in Danbury, the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI), People Empowering People (PEP) and Parents Supporting Educational Excellence (PSEE).

If funding from the Parent Trust Fund is cut, the State will lose matching funds from the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund. In addition, these Parent Trust programs train parents to be change agents and create stronger communities, which will be greatly needed in these tough economic times.

PEP, PLTI, and PSEE are valuable programs that improve the lives of families. To date, over 400 parents in the greater Danbury area have graduated from these programs. *As a result of this training, graduates have created free or low-cost community programs that have benefited hundreds of children and their families:*

- New recreational programs for Danbury's children with special needs, including soccer and swimming programs.
- English Chats, a bilingual parent/child social group, and book swaps at the Danbury Library
- Recreational programs for preschoolers at the PAL building and at the Bethel Parks and Recreation
- Creation of the Greater Danbury Child and Family Network, a network for parents with children with special needs in the Birth to Three System and their providers

And graduates have successfully run for public office and are more involved in local PTO's and other community boards.

The Connecticut Commission on Children ensures that parent leadership programs are offered at the highest level of quality throughout the state and looks out for our most precious treasure, Connecticut's children and our future. The Commission has been instrumental in bringing new

The purpose of Danbury Children First is *to involve, empower, and support parents* to improve the lives of children at home, in school and in the community

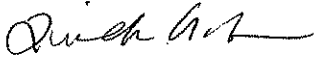
Page 2

resources to Connecticut's children and families, and bolstered community building from the ground up through parents who care deeply about the educational success of their children.

Attached is the testimony of two parent leaders from Danbury's Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI).

If you would like more information, please contact me at (203)797-8088 or Lindak@danburychildrenfirst.org

Sincerely,



Linda A. Kosko
Executive Director